



Remains of the Future-Past

On the cover

**Debnath Basu**

Untitled | 30 x 18 cm | Type writer Print, Industrial Graphite Powder on Paper | 2007

# Remains of the Future-Past

## Remains of The Future-Past

The glossary of linguistic terms, states the Future-in-past tense as an absolute-relative tense that refers to a time located in the future, relative to a contextually determined temporal reference point that itself must be located in the past, relative to the moment of utterance.

Examples:  
(English)

- John left for the front; he would never return

Since genesis human-beings have envisioned a state of endless temporality, emulating and interpreting a grandeur that seems endlessly creative. We can perhaps lay claim to being nature's ultimate aim. The significant key in the chain of creation, that could unlock the source, its mechanisms imprinted as code within the chains of our very own DNA.

The idea of infinity itself presents two truths, one that deems it immeasurable, endless, and unknowable, and the other, as a completeness, a universality and a finality.

Kant speaks of the idea of 'endless duration', first as a dichotomy, as two states of the sublime; an eternal past that would signify completeness- a sense of the 'noble sublime'. 'A 'horizon of sensitive representation', which can produce in the subject a state of mind(Gemutsstimmung) and then an attitude (Denkungsart), which is generated by the feeling of the sublime (das Erhabene) in nature', as one feels while gazing at a Pyramid'. Yet the idea of an infinite endless future causes dread and invokes the sensation of a terrifying sublime.

'In his essay 'The End of all Things', Kant however speaks of 'future infinity' as the idea of a persistence beyond the realm of the phenomenal(the physical world), what takes away the depressive thought of a noumenal end- a complete end of the 'horizon of experience' upon death. 'The Pyramids symbolize a monumental memory of a past which can endure cyclic catastrophes in time and history, while with its mummies symbolize the stubborn resistance of human culture to death as a natural phenomenon.'

Kant breaks away from the idea of eternity as an endless duration in time, suggesting that in the notion of death as a passing from time unto eternity, one would assume that eternity itself was 'outside time'- something incommensurable with time, where future and the past existed simultaneously. And if one were to envision the persistence of life as a noumenon, or a 'soul substrate' after death, one could envision this presence also in the living- a magnitude which is in-itself and incommensurable with time.

This exhibition presents arts that have a diverse range of subjects, yet possess a value of the sublime, what has always connected us as 'soul', linking our past to our future- as humane metaphor or as 'free consciousness', in nature or in rebellion within our existential mythologies. An edict to truth that has been the basis of our continuity from past to future, what was assumed in the pre-critical philosophies of our time, 'as is' or 'als ob', the grounds of cognition that led to civilization, to culture, and morality as a species. What also makes us wonder of our existence as a dwarfness in time- a projected sub-limit of a far greater magnitude; a nascent consciousness within an 'absolute completeness'.

The works reflect upon our existence as we have evolved from nature, such that as we build our world we may visualize herewith, our future in the light of an expanse that saw us evolve a select progeny, one amongst many other diverse offsprings; all parts of the same absolute, connected within a cycle of unending creation, a beginning with no end that will continue even after our world and many others cease to exist, as we sense ourselves a unique creation that is but a small segment of a far greater immensity.

*Based on Valid excerpts from 'Kant and The Idea of The End' – an Essay by Andrea Tagliapietra*



Ambadas | 16 x 19.4 cm | Watercolour on paper | 1997

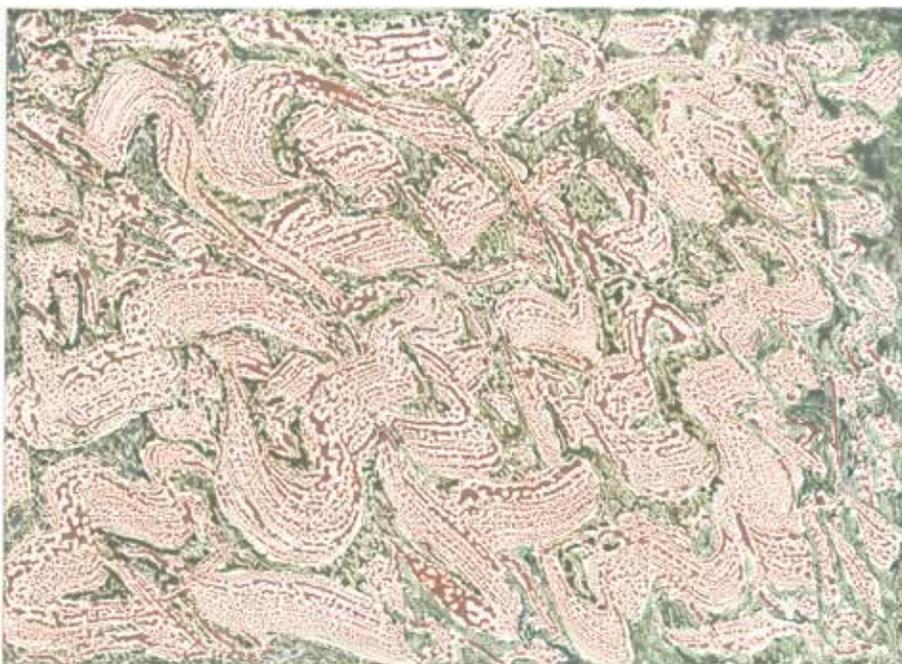
## **Ambadas**

B. 1922

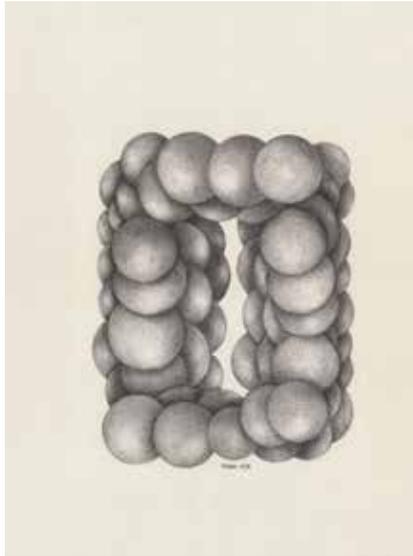
Ambadas' works leave an impression of infallible truth. Perhaps it takes that amount of detachment, a sensitivity for life, to surmise of our existential complexities, our conundrum of being, within a sublimity that conciliates; a congealment that rarefies its intensities. His works seem always of the present moment, a fervor of immersion; like light that merges with time and space, and is both witness and particle. A pure constancy that oscillates with life; with its evolving strains, as nature and as human.

It is with a rare proclivity that he paints metamorphosis, as pure energy strains but incarnated into tangible reality; as matter was congealed from space, and how nature was born- in forms like lakes, and rivulets- the anatomy of the earth as also perhaps the edges of human desire. The precipitates of a grand cosmogenesis of being, bearing no signs of origins or time frames or the indelible fractures of humanity.

Perhaps like Einstein he envisioned mass and energy in relativistic sub-union; a relativity that existence entwines to being, within a possibility of catharsis, of becoming. Where others ignored the ultimate reality: he realized the presence of light, that is within and beyond everything!



Ambadas | 14,5 x 19 cm | Watercolour on paper | 1997



Eric Bowen | Spheres II | 12 x 15 cm  
Permanent Ballpoint pen | 1974

## Eric Bowen

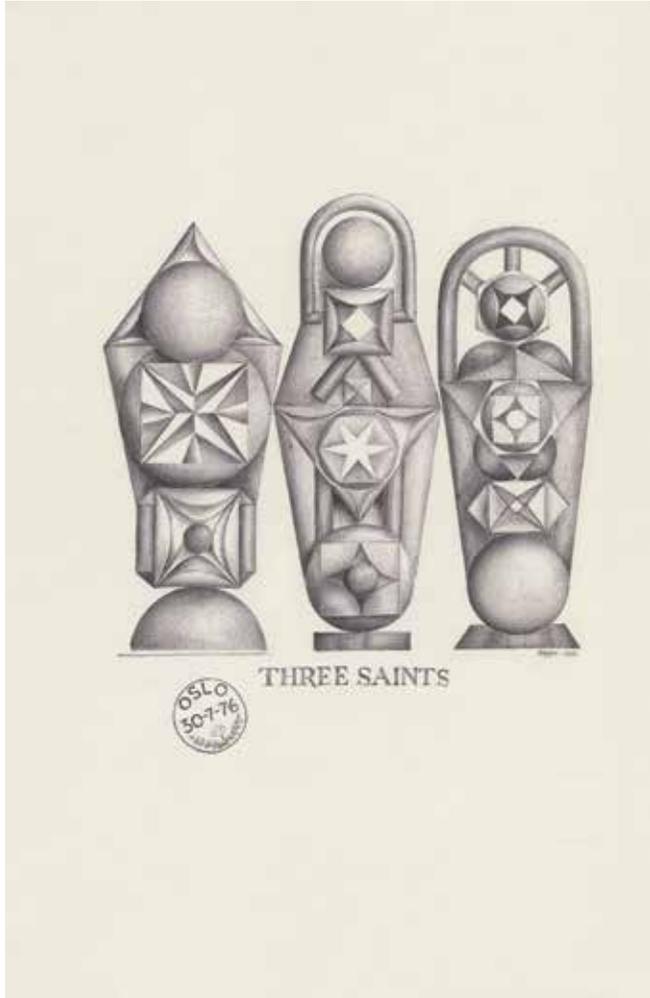
B.1929

*“The artist constructs a new symbol with his brush. This symbol is not a recognizable form of anything which is already finished, already made, already existing in the world - it is a symbol of a new world, which is being built upon and which exists by way of people.”*

—L. Lissitzky

Eric Bowen explored ideas of pure constructivism, taking them subsequently to the subliminal level of Tantra art. His compositions explored the constructivist idiom of pure tactile finitude, emancipating form as an autonomous material cohesion existing outside the predicates of composition- a meta-physical likeness of structure and dimensionality. Constructivism had emerged as an avant guardian movement in the former USSR, looking to radicalize art as a new social construct fuelled by emerging progressive attitudes of the time. The movement is contemporaneous with Cubism, Suprematism and Futurism.

Like Kandinsky Bowen’s art was a mellifluous syncopation of biomorphic and geometric forms contemplating the objective materiality of new psycho-spatial paradigms. Alfred H. Barr wrote on Biomorphism as what is *“Curvilinear rather than rectilinear, decorative rather than structural and romantic rather than classical in its exaltation of mystical, the spontaneous and the irrational.”*



Eric Bowen | The three saints | 15 x 16 cm | Permanent Ballpoint pen | 1976



Monirul Islam | Dancer on Mars | 25.4 x 28 cm | Acrylic on Sweet Box | 2018

## **Monirul Islam**

B.1943

Monirul Islam paints with a refreshing spontaneity that is instantly captivating, an element of human in nature that places the self as transparent to the subject, an inherent sense of purity and freedom that attaches us to the gravity of land and earth and intensifies our instinct of life. What is an intense reciprocation of pure sense in time, a cartography of the soul, that travels through its own timelines and space frames, and bends them at will; as we instantaneously realize, that all that existence is, is but a 'dream within a dream.' I daresay that such an art, and the pure practices of creating art by instinct, are widely lost in present times- now but a nostalgia, an art from a magical time- visibly lost, where "the idea of art being greater than the artist" was perhaps an artist's foremost absolution..



Monirul Islam | Grey love | 25.4 x 28 cm | Acrylic on Sweet Box | 2018



Rajendar Tiku | Visitations I | 28 x 46 cm  
Acrylic on Paper | 2007

## **Rajendar Tiku**

B.1953

Rajendar Tiku's meditative sculptures and as much his paper works are the unique idiom of a contemporary Indian modernism. His works are the missing links to a timeless spiritual reserve that suffuses our corporeality, what Sartre deems as the bridge between being and nothingness.

Looking at Tiku's compositions one seems to encounter a 'heterogeneous sameness', like finding missing notes of the 'enigmatic scale', a fact that one comes to invariably sense and appreciate in his works, in their poetic incongruities, as seemingly the 'cracks that let the light in'. His works seem to exist in unification, each one an integral of a seamless sum of forms, as if created by the silence they contain, perhaps like the sea's creation of seashells.

One senses of these as fragments assimilated over time and not discovered by empiricistic negation. As an afterthought looking over at their content, one becomes aware that the impetus of creation lies in virtues far simpler, in a reservoir of memories from a childhood spent in Kashmir. Rajendar Tiku lives in exile and as an artist still braids these associations. Through the sutures in his works, he holds fast time, and all the memories that lie nestled within, his works have both earnestness and detachment, they possess yet do not supersede, they have a magical quality that imbues the surrounding space with their presence.



Rajendar Tiku | Visitations II | 28 x 46 cm | Acrylic on Paper | 2007

Rajendar Tiku has been felicitated with The Padmshree and is the winner of both The Pollock Krasner and The Gottlieb Grant. His works are shown at the prestigious museum of drawings and small sculpture in Velaluka, Croatia along with greats such as Giacometti and Henry Moore.



Amitava Das | Head | 12.7 x 20.3 cm  
Mixed media on paper | 1989

## **Amitava Das**

B.1947

*“it requires a rare vocation to be a sensualist” says Camus. His faith in life saw it’s absurdity suffused in it’s sensuality. “Yet at the same period the carob-trees cover all of Algeria with a scent of love .. And again that scent hallows the union of man and earth and awakens in us the only really virile love in this world; ephemeral and noble.”- Albert Camus, ‘Summer in Algiers’.*

Amitava Das’s works present a sensualist’s vivid liturgy of time- a mythical allegiance that celebrates the nostalgia of all its ephemeral becomings. His works explore the dichotomy of being in the world, of pre-existing on time’s surface; as a nature-self that immerses in its great cyclical spiral, or a rogue bionic automaton that is endlessly in sync, wresting control of its alien periodicity- what is analogous to Sisyphus’ metaphysical revolt of the human condition. Such observances of time are perhaps possible for his sensualist protagonist- the human self- as the outsider, much as Camus’s Meursault or even Herman Hesse’s Steppenwolfe( who lived within the nostalgia of some hallowed wilderness) keeping a keen eye for life’s minutest details: of present moments that could paint a more sanguine picture of humanity, a pre verbal universe of the absurd man, who is ‘transparent to things but opaque to its meanings’<<J.P.Sartre.



Amitava Das | Atlas Shrugged | 12.7 x 20.3 cm | Watercolour on Paper | 1990



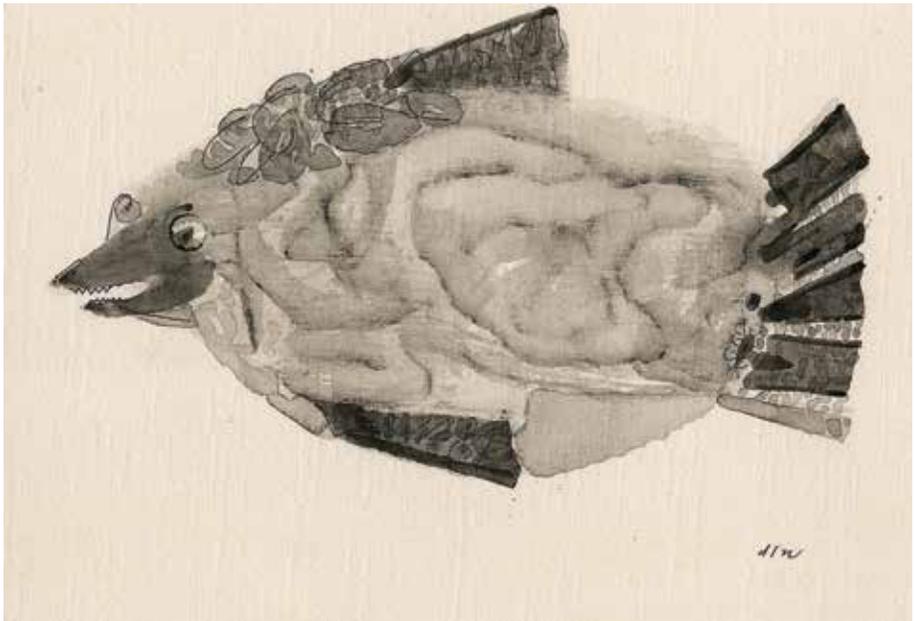
DLN Reddy | The Wildebeest | Pen and Ink on Paper | 25.4 x 35.5 cm | 2014

## **DLN Reddy**

B.1949

DLN Reddy's work seems possessed by the existential intensity of our characteristically human virtues that he depicts with the sensitivity of a poet and a gentleman. Much as the mythical charm and daring tenderness of the great romantics, who could comprehend the nuances, premise to a lady's morale, his works seem to mirror the world within the volitions, instincts and constrictions that sum up its beauty - a genuine portrait of life, in character, expressed in its sensual sublimity and grandiose singularity. A complete study that does not overshadow or distort perception, rather bears a refreshing honesty that is at once noble and reassuring and re-affirms the fairer edict of our humanesque.

His anthropomorphisms effectuate a catharsis from the existentially climactic demeanor that seems to intensify his other works. Such deviation presences an unleavening of sorts, a surmise that existence and nothingness may be concurrent and harmonious, picturized within a rare solace!

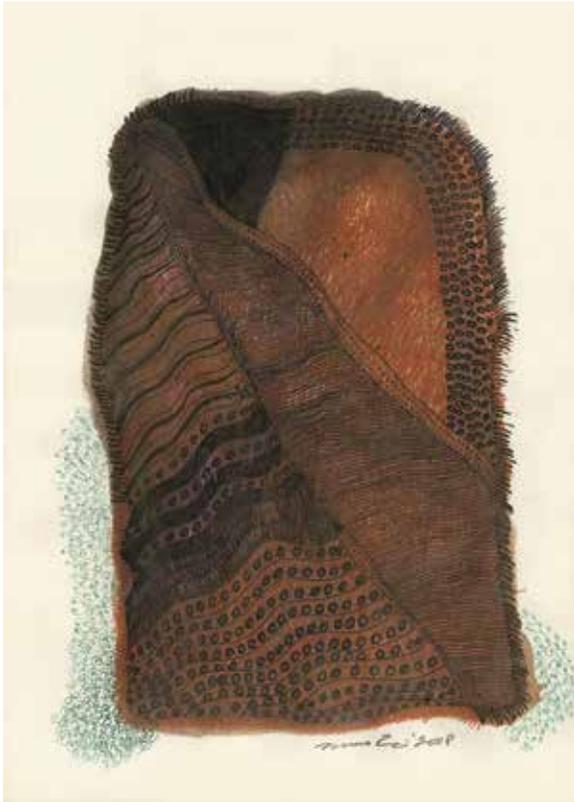


DLN Reddy | Fish | 25.4 x 36 cm | Pen and Ink on Paper | 2014

*“Modern, Contemporary, Rhythm, Poetry, Ambiguity, Eroticism, Pain, Sorrow, Beauty, Ugliness, Horror, Diseased, Deceased, Raped, the Poor and the Lost, these Nouns and Adjectives are in my awareness .*

*I have often changed my artistic language. Sometimes the change is subtle and at other times it is drastic, and in both cases there is an invisible thread that binds these works together. A lot of times I was questioned on the constant changes in my works, but I never wanted to make my work a constant. The changes that seem are often a reflection of the changes within me, and all changes that happen within me, have a subtle connection to who I earlier was. This connection, or this invisible thread, can be observed by anyone who pays attention, or who wants to know the mystery of transitions and its reflection in artistic language and the evolution of the self.”*

-dlr

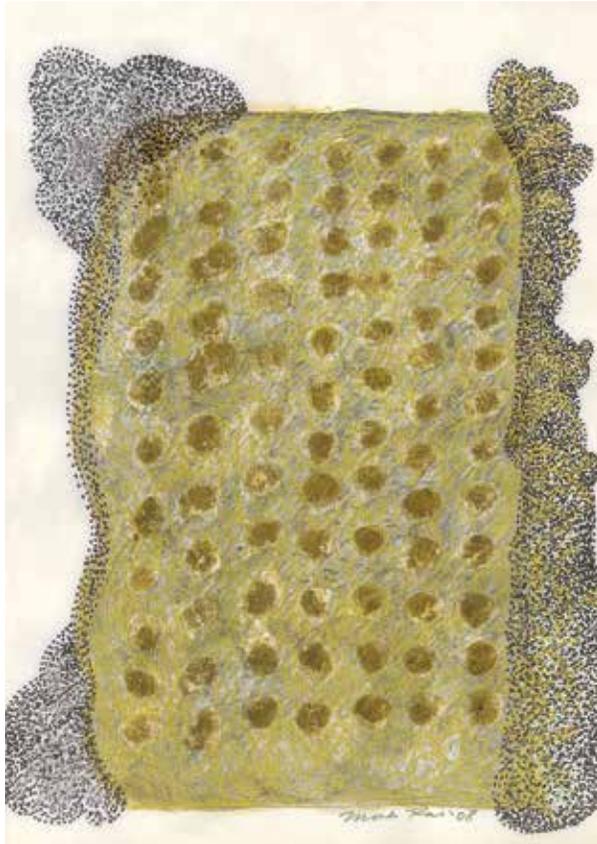


Mona Rai | Untitled | 12.7 x 20.3 cm | Mixed media on paper | 2008

## **Mona Rai**

B.1947

Mona Rai's work seems to possess a primeval charm- what seems to affect time with an organic rarefaction. An invocation to a sublime order looking back at a seamless present through primordial eyes - what Camus calls "*the primitive hostility of the world that rises up to face us across the millennia, what we might cease to understand, because for centuries we have understood in it solely the images and designs that we have attributed to it beforehand, and that henceforth we lack the power to make use of that artifice, as the world evades us and becomes itself again.*". Rai visualizes symbols of existence beyond anthropocentric foundations 'where nature is inter-preted as a relativized referant, as a semiotics of cultures and culture-codes'- purely of human intentions and existential outcomes. Her works contemplate existence as cathartic regeneration –like a semeiosis with agency- where 'symbols pre-exist as living organisms' partaking in an 'infinite semeiosis'. <<C.S Peiree



Mona Rai | Untitled | 12.7 x 20.3 cm | Mixed media on paper | 2008

*“In contrast to the cultural semiotic perspective of nature, the perspective of general semiotics investigates sign processes in nature as semiotic processes sui generis. Contributions to this extension of the semiotic field come from the history of semiotics with its long tradition of the study of natural signs. Research in zoosemiotics and biosemiotics has proceeded with the lowering of the semiotic threshold from human semiosis to semiotic processes whose agents are animals and micro-organisms, in fact all living cells. More recently, the question has been raised whether precursors of semiosis should even be sought in the inanimate or prebiotic world and whether semiotics should also include the field of physicosemiotics: autocatalytic systems, dissipative structures, and other processes in dynamic physical systems, which testify to the possibility of a spon-taneous increase of order in nature”*

- Semiotics of Nature, Nöth, Winfried / Kull, Kalevi (Hrsg.)



Jaya Ganguly | Untitled | 12.7 x 20.3 cm  
Mixed media on paper | 2008

## **Jaya Ganguly**

B.1958

Being a master of expressionism Jaya's works truly speak for themselves! Her fluency with the interpersonal dialogues of living seems so naturally ordained. Where life's theatre of the absurd and its manifold incursions, needed be Re-presented in art; as cubism realigned it for better measure, within new rudiments of space, depth and volume, and surrealism, in its catechism of time, and the new arts that normalized it all- as sheer vacuum, that negates the nostalgia and presents only the details; her work preserves the salient grounds of pure expression, seemingly infected with a freedom that drives the purer senses far beyond the realm of their expanse.

Her art is perhaps more likely a garden of the absurd, a feminine universe, as was originally appointed and what tends to and connects our humanity within an animistic experience, our volitions transparent and grandiose like nature's fecund forms, as we collide head on with thorns and roses.

Her works seem to possess an element of sensory climax, a sudden and unexpected euphoria what seems heightened or is disoriented within another time and space, in her works this organic maelstrom of humanity is sometimes suffused in bewilderment, what is not an absence or negation, but a nostalgia that fills our moments.



Jaya Ganguly | Untitled | 12.7 x 20.3 cm | Mixed media on paper | 2008



Debnath Basu |Untitled | 30 x 18 cm  
Type writer Print, Industrial Graphite Powder on Paper | 2007

*“Beside the texts, the process of generating images in my works is organic to the extent that I begin from rapid scribbling and undecipherable marks gradually paving way for more identifiable forms and discovering these wretched hapless figures caught in tumult amidst chaos and eventually thrown back by the system”.*

- **Debnath Basu**

## **Debnath Basu**

B.1961

“In my works, ‘layers of visual subtexts are bound to appear as a whole, a jungle of figures in the jungle of words, where I live, work and breathe!’ “I prefer to use ‘Industrial Graphite Powder’ on paper in my works”- he remarks, “as I live in Howrah (a highly populated oldest suburb), which is also known for being an industrial hub for a long time; I find the smoky and dusty, yet sparkling quality of this powder suitable for my works conceptually and metaphorically.” “The word satire transforms into satirical irony and social commentary in my works.”

Perhaps the sense of numbness that Debnath’s works imbibe is much the ether of immersion; an interface through which these impressions can gestate and come to present themselves in the very depths of their dissolute alienness. Debnath’s narratives from Howrah are stark metaphors of existentialism in contemporary times. His works envision a netherworld, a mortal subterranean of humanity lost, the nothingness that lies within what Sartre calls the ‘being-

in-itself' and the 'being-for-itself' – a state of vacuum; perhaps the aftershock of a world that drives us to 'bad faith' ( 'the condition in which people cannot transcend their situations in order to realize what they must be (human) and what they are not (waiter, grocer, etc.))' – in being as that, what lends us control and influence over objects and other people, which often leads us to an inversion of our selves as 'pure beings' as 'human beings', as we forego our first and foremost edicts of life.

His works present a sublime catharsis to the conundrum of 'being' – where the insecurities of the physical world, its pain and mortification seem siphoned off, and in its wake is regained the freedom of the void, an abyss of time that stares back hollow eyed- a non soul- an obscure purity that devitalizes the grounds for feeling.



Debnath Basu |Untitled | 28 x 18 cm  
Type writer Print, Industrial Graphite Powder on Paper | 2007

### **Cut-Out Paper Works:**

*"In 2005, I did a work where I used big size "We" & "?"- (each size approx: 3 ft x2 ft) and I planned to use the same letter press printed paper for that. But that said paper were not so big and then I cut them in different shapes and pasted them one after another to make the said "We" & "?". Much later, I realised that the shapes of those grotesque pieces are quite interesting and planned to explore them and once again I began to use the texts of legal documents as the background texture of the works whose contents in a way express the Kafkaesque situation in which a citizen finds himself trapped amidst legal procedures. My take on this is of course tongue-in-cheek with a touch of dark humour."*

**- Debnath Basu**



Neeraj Bakshy | 12.7 x 20.3 cm | Pen and Mixed media on paper | 2015

## **Neeraj Bakshy**

B.1970

Looking at Bakshy's works one is overcome with a sense of benign wonderment, perhaps like Marcel Proust's Madeleine moment, an involuntary sensation of time lost and time regained, his *le métier* appropriating the formal quality and sparseness of traditional 'transparent' watercolour, lending his fictitious narrations the nonchalance of a well appointed hallucination. The element of sparseness in his works invokes the idea of transience- the eternal blankness of time that envelops the visual episodes linked to memories, like a surreal film with no ends or beginnings.

Bakshy is one of the few later day artists to have flourished in the rare organic synthesis that governed the art practice in India until the eighties and the nineties, where the formative regional cultures would assimilate organically with western formalism, creating grounds for a novel and sophisticated esotericism. As a native of Kashmir where 'mystical convalescence', as they say, is part and parcel of growing up, Bakshy's art practice came to sublimely reflect elements of 'Magical Realism'. He began figurizing a subliminal iconography of the skull and the skeletal form, bringing an uncanny recollection with the fantastique' of James Ensor. Much like his favourite writer(Gabriel Marquez), Bakshy came to express the element of the magical in the everyday, openly and without any reservations.

Bakshy reflects upon the alienation of the self relational with nature, having witnessed the inscrutable clarity that is life and death from close quarters, as he travelled across the Masai Mara in Kenya. His compositions are like a 'meta-theatre of the absurd' where the animals do break through the 'fourth wall', impassionedly reminding us of our own humanness.



Neeraj Bakshy | 12.7 x 20.3 cm | Pen and Mixed media on paper | 2015

“Two things fill the mind with ever new and increasing admiration and awe, the oftener and the more steadily we reflect on them: the starry heavens above and the moral law within. I have not to search for them and conjecture them as though they were veiled in darkness or were in the transcendent region beyond my horizon; I see them before me and connect them directly with the consciousness of my existence. The former begins from the place I occupy in the external world of sense, and enlarges my connection therein to an unbounded extent with worlds upon worlds and systems of systems, and moreover into limitless times of their periodic motion, its beginning and continuance. The second begins from my invisible sense, my personality, and exhibits me in a world which has true infinity, but which is traceable only by the understanding, and with which I discern that I am not in a merely contingent but in a universal and necessary connection, as I am also thereby with all those visible worlds. The former view of a countless multitude of worlds annihilates as it were my importance as an animal creature, which after it has been for a short time provided with vital power, one knows not how, must again give back the matter of which it was formed to the planet it inhabits (a mere speck in the universe). The second, on the contrary, infinitely elevates my worth as an intelligence by my personality, in which the moral law reveals to me a life independent of animality and even of the whole sensible world, at least so far as may be inferred from the destination assigned to my existence by this law, a destination not restricted to conditions and limits of this life, but reaching into the infinite.”

**- Immanuel Kant, The Critique of Practical Reason**



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THREE SAINTS

